(d) In the case of these items, irradiation is carried out for the purpose of hygicnization in order to destroy any micro organisms or food-borne parasites, rather than to increase the shelf life. Shelf life of food items such as onion can be extended by six to nine months by irradiation. A plant for irradiation of onions is being set up by the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) at Lasalgaon, Nashik District of Maharashtra.

Modernisation of Postal Services

2621. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to bring forward shortly a bill to modernise postal services in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the proposed law has been designed to take care in improving the quality of services and make them more consumer friendly and relevant to the needs and aspiration of the people;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) by when the new law is likely to be put in place?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. It is intended to effect comprehensive amendment to the Indian Post Office Act, 1898, to enable the Government to introduce services with customer-friendly features and make available the benefits of technological developments to the postal customers.